822
R3312m

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MISCONSTRUCTIONS.

An Original Farce.

BY

ELLIS REYNOLDS.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND,
(*Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market,*)
LONDON.

As first performed at the Royal Princess's Theatre, by the Members of the Queen's (Westminster) Rifle Volunteers. On Thursday, 10th April, 1862.

Characters.

JOHN DOUGHBERRY, Esq. (*a retired Baker*)... ... ...
MR. GIMPER (*a retiring Draper*)
ERNEST PLUMEVILLE (*an advancing young man*) ... ...
Y, 80 (*a Protector of the Public Peace*)
ADOLPHUS (*a Youth in Buttons*)

By Members of the Corps

MISS ANGELINA DOUGHBERRY (*Sister to Mr. Doughberry*)... ... Miss Fielding.
FANNY MERTON (*Niece to Ditto*) Miss Charlotte Taylor
MRS. CÆSAR YOUNGHUSBAND (*a Widow Lady*) ... ... Miss Marie Henderson.
MATILDA JANE (*a Domestic*) ... Miss Helen Honey.

Period—The Present Day.

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SCENE.—*Interior of a Sitting Room; stand of flowers at* C. *back; chairs, easy chair, sofa, distributed about stage.*

FANNY *seated beside work table,* L. C., *embroidering;* DOUGHBERRY *with letter in hand seated beside table with writing materials,* R. C.; ADOLPHUS *standing* C. *beside* DOUGH., *discovered. Time, morning.*

DOUGH. This is not the first, second, or even third time that I have had occasion to remark upon the utter want of all proper degree of respectability, with regard to your behaviour as a domestic in livery.

ADOLPH. Why, sir——

DOUGH. Now don't attempt to "argufy" the topic, sir. (*aside*) There, bless me! whenever I get excited, I'm sure to forget my present position in society. Adolphus Jenkins, I have on several occasions remonstrated with you, in respect to your bringing me letters in your hand, instead of on our salver—our silver salver.

ADOLPH. Yes, sir, but——

DOUGH. But what, sir? How dare you but me, sir, I'll not be butted by anybody, let alone my own domestic in livery.

ADOLPH. No, sir, only Matilda Jane ain't been and gone and——

DOUGH. Hold your tongue, sir; I should like to know when you will learn to talk a little less, and act a great deal better.

ADOLPH. Well, sir——

DOUGH. It isn't well, sir; it's ill, sir, decidedly—very ill, sir, and I won't put up with it.

FANNY. Now, dear uncle, don't put yourself in a way about such a trivial affair.

DOUGH. "Trivial," d'ye call it? Trivial indeed! What's the good of silver salvers if we don't use 'em; and what's the good of domestics in livery if they don't know how to use 'em. Leave the room, sir.

ADOLPH. Yes, sir. *Exit,* R.

DOUGH. I remember having once seen a book bearing the title, "The Greatest Plague in Life," which a very clever gentleman of the name of Mayhew, set forth to be domestics. I don't know to what particular class of the genus, "Slavey,"

he alluded, but I should imagine domestics in livery. Now, that young person, Adolphus Jenkins, is the greatest plague in my life, and next to him, your sex, miss, especially your aunt and Mrs. Younghusband.

FANNY. La, uncle! (*advancing to his chair*)

DOUGH. What d'ye mean by "la, uncle?" I hate that expression—I've had quite enough of law.

FANNY. I'm sure Mrs. Younghusband is a good kind soul—she's been almost a mother to me.

DOUGH. And hasn't Angelina been one?

FANNY. Oh, yes! aunt Ann is very good, and very kind, but- -

DOUGH. There's that "but" again—but what?

FANNY. She is so formal, so precise to young people; she doesn't understand our ways.

DOUGH. Like a great many other people.

FANNY. Now, Mrs. Younghusband is much younger than aunt, and she and I get on a great deal better together; and I'm sure you ought not to say anything against her, uncle, because she always speaks in the highest terms of you.

DOUGH. Oh! she does, does she? much obliged to her.

FANNY. By-the-bye, she's coming to spend the day here.

DOUGH. When? (*drops letter*, FANNY *picks it up*)

FANNY. To-day. Here's a letter you have not opened; what funny writing, too.

DOUGH. Give it to me; it's Gimper's fist, I'll swear to it; what's he got to say, I wonder. (*reads*) "Dear Sir," Umph! Dear sir. "I purpose doing myself the pleasure of calling upon you to-day, on a matter of vital importance. The dearest wish of my heart——" Oh, ho! he's waking up, and I can see it all at a glance, of course. Fanny, my dear, bring a chair here and sit down beside me. My love, you are now—let me see, I left Long Acre in '53, and you were then ten years old, that makes you nineteen, eh?

FANNY. Yes, uncle. (*aside*) What can he mean?

DOUGH. I've been thinking you will soon be old enough to have a house and a home of your own, and therefore I have looked out for a nice suitable match.

FANNY. Oh, uncle! (*aside*) He must mean Ernest. (*aloud*) You are such a dear kind old uncle, and I'm sure your choice is a good one, and we shall be so happy, and——

DOUGH. Of course. He'll be here to-day, and then I daresay we shall settle it all.

Enter ANGELINA, R.

Ha! Anney, here is a letter from Gimper, he's coming to see us to-day.

FANNY. Oh! and aunt, somebody else is coming.

DOUGH. By-the-bye, yes, Mrs. Younghusband will be here, so I must go and see about the wine; we'll have some of the supernaculum to-day. Ha, ha! the supernaculum. *Exit*, R.

ANGEL. Fanny, my dear, how does this cap do?—is it becoming?—does it show sufficient of my hair?—can you suggest any improvement? Dear me! how very provoking, that French madame has not sent home my new silk; I wonder if I could have it by sending to town for it. (*rings bell*)

FANNY. Surely, aunt, you don't require it so urgently as to send to town for it.

ANGEL. Most assuredly I do; here is company coming to-day, and I have only this ordinary dress to wear.

FANNY. Well, aunt, when Mrs. Younghusband came last week you wore it, and why not let it do now.

ANGEL. It is quite good enough for Mrs. Younghusband, but we are to be favoured with the society of a gentleman, who is coming on a very delicate mission, and it befits me to appear in my very best; besides, my dear, Mr. Gimper's taste——

FANNY. La, aunt, poor timid Mr. Gimper I dare say will scarcely dare to look at it.

ANGEL. Mr. Gimper is certainly very retiring—perhaps a little too much so—but by woman's gentleness he may be improved; he has had but few opportunities of mixing in society, so we must try and bring him out.

FANNY. (*laughing*) I leave him entirely to you.

ANGEL. Where is that Adolphus? (*rings again*) That boy is never to be found when wanted.

Enter ADOLPHUS, R., *clothes and face very dirty.*

Good gracious! where have you been?

ADOLPH. In the cellar with master, a looking after the mushroom catsup.

ANGEL. (*sitting at table*, R. C.—*writing*) The what?

ADOLPH. Well, if it warn't that, 'twere some other black sort of wine stuff.

ANGEL. Go, and clean yourself, take this note to town, (*rising and giving note*) and wait to bring back a dress.

ADOLPH. Buss it, marm?

ANGEL. Yes, certainly, there and back, and don't stop to play with any of the street boys. (ADOLPHUS *looks disgusted, and exit*, R.) Fanny, dear, I must leave you, (*crosses*, L.—*aside*) Mr. Gimper, the last time he was here, was helped twice to batter pudding; I'll make one for to-day, I like it also.

Exit, L.—ERNEST *pops his head in* R. *door, calling.*

ERNEST. Tsch! Fanny! Fanny!

FANNY. Who's that? Oh! Ernest, how did you enter?

ERNEST. Walking along the road, discovered an open gate and door with nobody in view, but—knew that somebody was inside—sudden resolution seized me, boldly marched up to the house, entered it, gained the first floor, and here I am; if anybody wants to know who I am, say I'm the gasman, come to look after the metre, or the—anybody in fact. Well, here I am, and here I mean to stay for the present, for, Fanny, I have something very particular to tell you; my old guardian, I have just heard, is very ill, and if he does not get better in the course of to-day,

Enter Y 80 *cautiously*, R.

I'm to be ready to start off to-morrow, directly I receive the summons.

Y 80. (*aside*) Ho! that's the party has hexpects the summons, do he; well he won't 'ave to wait till to-morrow for hit; I'll call my witnesses. *Exit unperceived*, R.

ERNEST. So, dearest, should he leave this wicked world, the chances are he'll leave a little sum behind him for me, and—you know who; but should he be determined to live a little longer I will appeal to his better nature, tell your uncle of our attachment, and if he won't consent and you will, I'll carry you off—— (*noise outside*)

FANNY. Hush! (*goes* R. *door*, *listening*) There's some one coming. Oh dear, oh dear! what is to be done? Hide here, Ernest, behind this chair. (ERNEST *hides behind easy chair*, L.C.)

Enter DOUGHBERRY, R., *followed by* Y 80 *and* MATILDA.

MATILDA. Which it is no, sir, as the street door 'ave never been left oping, as long as I've been in the 'ouse, no, nor never shall——

DOUGH. Fanny, my dear, this gentleman, a member of one of the proudest institutions of our country, informs me that he saw a burglar, who has long haunted these premises, steal into this house, and further, that he actually beheld him in this very room and talking with you.

FANNY. A burglar with me! What do you mean?

Y 80. Yes, miss, from hinformation received I hentered these premises and hobserved the trace of a gravel walk from the street door to this hapartment; hupon looking into this hidentical room, I diskivered the party in question in confabulation with you. This ere's 'is description. (*takes out note book*) "'Eight about five feet eight, complexion fair, mud coloured hair, hage habout twenty-two, and generally wears dark clothes." That ere's the party I wants, and that ere's the party I seed, and so I haxes parding, but I'll search for him.

FANNY. No such person has been here—the man must have been drinking. (*crosses to* R. C.)

Y 80. Drinking! what's that?

ERNEST *exit*, L., *unperceived*—Y 80 *searches*.

MATILDA. Which I 'ave know'd this distinguished officer some months, and always found him excessive proper, no, nor smelling of beer, and which I thinks miss as you casts a libel on the Force.

Y 80. The party hain't visible, but I knows has he hain left the 'ouse, so if you pleases, sir, we'll search that 'ere hapartment. *Exeunt* DOUGHBERRY *and* Y 80, L.

FANNY. Matilda Jane, can you keep a secret?

MATILDA. Which it's many on my own as I've got, and means to keep, leastways few would like to know 'em.

FANNY. Then listen, Matilda. The policeman was correct in stating that he saw a man speaking with me; but he was not a burglar, he was Mr. Ernest Plumeville, a most respectable young man, and—and——

MATILDA. Which I perfectly understands, miss, and you wants me to induce that active and intelligent member of the Force to leave this room.

FANNY. That is precisely what I wish.

MATILDA. Very well, miss, I'll do it; which I flatters myself, from my long experience in the environs of town, as I 'ave thoroughly studied the manners, and customs, and 'abits of the perlice, and knows exactually 'ow they is to be wheedled.

Re-enter Y 80, *followed by* DOUGHBERRY *and* ANGELINA, L.

ANGEL. I will not allow it, brother; no man shall enter my apartment.

DOUGH. But, sister, consider——

ANGEL. I consider myself, and I will never permit such a thing—never!

Y 80. Mum, I ham a p'liceman has knows his dooty, and never wishes to go beyond hit; and hif so be has you gives me your word has the party I wants hain't hin your chamber, why I says, very well, mum.

DOUGH. Certainly she does, Mr. Y—8—0.

MATILDA. Why hate ought? which he don't as I knows on.

FANNY. Matilda, get him away.

MATILDA. Benjamin.

Y 80. My hangel of beauty!

MATILDA. Which arter all this anxiety, a drop of fourpenny and a bit of rabbit pie might be acceptable, leastways it's in the safe as is downstairs.

Y 80. Lead on, I follows. Beg parding, sir, but burglaries

and hother bad hoffences his hawfully hon the hincrease 'ereabouts. *Exeunt* Y 80 *and* MATILDA, R.

ANGEL. How dare such a low common fellow presume to desire to penetrate my apartment? I've a great mind, brother, to—to—to cry, that I have. (*sinks into chair*, L.)

DOUGH. Fanny, I have a few words to say to your aunt, so leave us, dear.

FANNY. (*aside*) What shall I do if he should discover Ernest? Oh, what will become of us! Had I not better see to these flowers?

DOUGH. Presently will do for them, my dear; I wish to be alone with your aunt. *Exit* FANNY, R. Angelina Doughberry, this is my house—at all events I pay the rent and taxes, and therefore I consider myself justified in remarking this is my house; and while it is so, never let me find anybody within its walls attempt to offer any slight to the constitutional government of this free and happy land, in the person of one of its noble peace protectors. Now leave off those convulsive grunts, do, and listen to a very important piece of information. Samuel Gimper I have known from a child—Samuel Gimper I esteem as a friend—and Samuel Gimper I hope to have for a nephew.

ANGEL. Brother!

DOUGH. I didn't say brother, I said nephew.

ANGEL. What! marry Samuel Gimper aged forty to Fanny Merton aged nineteen!

DOUGH. They can't be married without their ages, can they?

ANGEL. But, brother, this union is absurd.

DOUGH. No exception to the general rule, then.

ANGEL. Besides, Fanny may not give her consent.

DOUGH. Pack o' nonsense, sister; she's my niece, he's my friend; I think the match a desirable one, and there's an end to the matter. Fanny not give her consent, indeed.

Enter ADOLPHUS, R.

ADOLPH. Please, sir, Mr. Biffins has called about the "Never-Cut-Down-Trees-About-London Society;" he says you're a director, and——

DOUGH. Show him into the library, Adolphus.

ADOLPH. (*going* R.) Yes, sir.

ANGEL. Stop, Adolphus; why have you not started for town, you good-for-nothing idle boy?

ADOLPH. What am I to do? Furst, master wants the wine decanter'd; then Matilda Jane wants the plate and the boots, and the knives cleaned; and then the butcher, and the baker, and the greengrocer wants attending to—I can't go everywhere and do everythink—I can't——

Dough. Well, go now where Miss Doughberry wants you.

Adolph. Very well, sir. (*going* R.)

Dough. Stay, I want you first of all to take a note for me to Norwood—you can go afterwards.

Exeunt Doughberry *and* Adolphus, R.

Angel. And I shall not get my dress in time to appear in becoming costume. Heigho! I'm a weak, fragile being, with no one to protect me from the world's hard buffets! Samuel Gimper and Fanny Merton—can it be possible that Fanny has any particular liking for him? Most certainly not—she could never regard him otherwise than as an uncle, and that is precisely the relationship I mean him to bear to her. As I said before, I'm only a weak fragile being,

Re-enter Ernest, L.

But Samuel Gimper does not marry Fanny Merton—that is, if I can prevent it.

Ernest. (*coming forward*) And you can prevent it.

Angel. Merciful goodness! Who are you, sir?

Ernest. (*à la melo-dramatic, disarranging his hair and neck-tie*) Madam, you are now gazing on one of fortune's footballs, a creature tossed hither and thither at her caprice. 'Twas in the depth of winter when the snow flakes fell around us, and nature donn'd his whitest Witney great coat, that I first met Miss Fanny Merton. But I need not detail my story to you, madam; with instinctive female genius you divine the sequel, your matchless intellect at once grasps the end of my narrative —I love Miss Merton.

Angel. And Fanny?

Ernest. Ah! madam—I dare not picture to myself such bliss; and yet a certain something seems to whisper here, "We may be happy yet."

Angel. Then leave your case in my hands; I'll see my niece, and——

Ernest. Niece? Madam, good gracious! Can it be that I have the honour of addressing the aunt of my Fanny—the accomplished Miss Doughberry?

Angel. (*aside*) What an exceedingly nice young man. Yes, sir.

Ernest. Madam, permit me. (*kissing her hand*) I can safely retire now, since I know who it is will interest herself for me. (*going* R. *stops—aside*) Oh, the deuce—I forgot that confounded bobby! (*returns*) I am afraid, my dear madam, owing to some mistake or other, a member of the police is billeted in this house, and lest I might divert him from his true and proper calling, I would infinitely prefer making my exit as secretly as possible.

ANGEL. Come this way, sir. (*going* L.) I know the person you allude to—a busy, prying, impudent fellow, so come this way, sir. (*opening door*, L.) By leaping from the window in my room you will gain the garden, and by scaling the wall at the end reach the lane that runs at the back of the house—this way, sir, this way. *Exeunt* ANGEL *and* ERNEST, L.

Enter MRS. YOUNGHUSBAND, *and* FANNY, R.

MRS. Y. And so, Fanny, your uncle has actually selected Mr. Plumeville for you, has he?

FANNY. Oh, yes; he told me he had fixed upon a suitable match, and that he was coming to-day; and sure enough he did come, and I shouldn't wonder if he's not far off now.

MRS. Y. What do you mean? not hiding I hope, we must have him show himself. Where is he?

FANNY. I think he's somewhere there. (*pointing*, L.)

MRS. Y. Then we'll go and unearth this young fox. (*a knock at the door*) Stay! there's a knock at the door.

FANNY. Come in!

Enter GIMPER, R.

GIMP. I—I beg pardon, Miss Merton, that is— I mean, ladies, I didn't know anybody was here.

FANNY. Then why did you knock?

GIMP. Oh! that is—I mean I thought only your uncle would be here, I beg your pardon, and—and I'll go down stairs. (*going*, R.)

MRS. Y. Pray don't stir, we are not cannibals or gorillas.

FANNY. Won't you take a seat? Uncle will be so glad to see you; I think he has been expecting you. (GIMPER *sits*)

GIMP. Oh! has he? that is, I mean I'm glad to hear it; I hope my coming won't put you out at all.

FANNY. Dear me, no; let me introduce you, Mr. Gimper, to my friend, Mrs. Younghusband.

GIMP. Very happy, ma'am, that is—I mean proud of the honour. (*rises*) Perhaps I'd better take a stroll till your uncle comes, Miss Fanny.

FANNY. Most certainly not, let me take your hat.

GIMP. I couldn't let you, that is—I mean, I'll put it down myself. (*puts it on tab'e, after having dropped it*)

MRS. Y. Poor man! he seems slightly discomposed, we must reassure him. (*draws chair towards* GIMPER, *who edges off*) Mr. Simper——

GIMP. (*much confused*) G-Gimper, if you please, ma'am——

MRS. Y. Are you fond of reading, Mr. Gimper?

GIMP. Yes, ma'am, sometimes.

MRS. Y. What style do you prefer?

GIMP. Yes, ma'am, that is, I mean, I really scarcely know. (*aside*) I wish Doughberry were here.

FANNY. (*aside to* MRS. G.) Keep him in conversation for a few minutes, I will seek for Ernest. Mr. Gimper, I'm sure you will excuse me for a short time. I leave you to entertain my friend till I return.

Exit, L., *a pause*—GIMPER *appears very uneasy.*

MRS. Y. Eh? I beg your pardon, but I didn't quite catch your last remark.

GIMP. Oh! that is, I mean I didn't speak.

MRS. Y. (*aside*) He certainly is a very entertaining companion, but I must rouse him a little. You have been acquainted with Mr. Doughberry some time, I presume, sir?

GIMP. Yes, ma'am, all my life, that is, I mean as long as I can remember.

MRS. Y. You should be proud of such a friend.

GIMP. I am, ma'am; John Doughberry is a worthy man with a good sterling heart, that is never closed against deserving appeals; he has his little weaknesses, as who has not, but he is firm in friendships, upright in his dealings, and plain spoken as a man ought to be, and I am proud of my friend, ma'am.

MRS. Y. (*aside*) Come, come, he has a tongue and can use it, too; not quite so foolish as he appeared, I'll try again. Then of course you also know Miss Angelina?

GIMP. (*with a deep sigh*) Ah! ma'am.

MRS. Y Why, what's the matter?

GIMP. That is, I mean, she is a worthy adjunct to her brother—a most superior lady, ma'am.

MRS. Y. You are a bachelor, I presume, Mr. Gimper?

GIMP. (*hesitating*) I—I—I am, ma'am.

MRS. Y. Are you fond of poetry? (GIMPER *bows*) What do you think of this passage.

" How poor is he, who through this wold can go,
And find no heart in unison with his,
What desert can there be so lonely
As this fair world without a—wife."

Eh? Mr. Gimper.

GIMP. I—I—I don't know, that is, I mean—wasn't that Doughberry's voice? Good morning, ma'am! (*going*, R., *encounters* Y 80 *at the door*)

Y 80. Parding, sir, but he's cut us this time, slick, sir.

GIMP. Why? which? when? where? how? who?

Y 80. Him has we're been awatching for—oh! 'tain't you, I sees now——

GIMP. "'Taint me;" no of course not, that is, I mean, I thought there was something wrong about me.

MRS. Y. There is some mistake; I presume you mistook this gentleman for Mr. Doughberry, who, I believe, is downstairs.

Y 80. Precisely, marm; I haxes parding, but hif so be has I'm wanted, I'm not far off; I've got my heye hupon this 'ouse and them has his hin it. *Exit*, R.

GIMP. (*aside*) Dear me! he looked very hard at me as he went out. What can I have done to have drawn the Argus eye of the law upon me, I wonder; I declare I feel quite hot.

Re-enter ANGELINA *and* FANNY, L.

FANNY. It's too bad! that it is, but I'll run away.

ANGEL. Hush, hush! my dear! Oh! Mr. Gimper. (MRS. YOUNGHUSBAND *and* FANNY *retire up*—GIMPER *stands silent, bowing—aside*) Poor fellow! his feelings appear too much for him; I must conquer my natural timidity and address him first. Oh! you naughty, naughty man, why have you stayed away so long? and you know my brother John is always so glad to see you. I say my brother John is always so very glad to see you.

GIMP. Yes, Miss Angelina—that is, I mean I'm very pleased to hear it, and I hope other people will be glad to see me too. (*aside*) Not bad for a beginning.

ANGEL. Of course they are.

GIMP. (*aside*) I wish those two young females would have the kindness to leave the room; I declare, I feel myself remarkably bold all of a sudden, I verily believe I could now make a terrific header into the sea of matrimony—I'll try. I—I was saying, Miss Doughberry—that is, I mean I was going to say—(*she looks at him and he becomes confused*) How is your brother? I haven't seen him yet.

MRS. Y. (*aside*) Come, come, Fanny, never mind, plot for plot; and I'll engage the young heads will beat the old ones yet. Let us take a walk in the garden, when you can tell me all about this morning's work. I'm sure Miss Doughberry and Mr. Gimper will excuse us.

ANGEL. Certainly. *Exeunt* MRS. Y. *and* FANNY, R. Mr. Gimper, you are fond of flowers, are you not? which do you prefer?

GIMP. (*aside*) I solemnly declare I don't feel that same strength of mind that I had half-a-minute ago; I wish Doughberry would come.

ANGEL. The rose, did you say?

GIMP. (*aside*) Gimper, be a man; as the song says, "Come arouse thee, arouse thee, my merry Swiss boy." But I'm neither a Swiss nor a boy, and I don't feel particularly merry; however, I will endeavour to arouse me. Miss Angelina

Doughberry ma'am, "there is a flower that bloometh when aut—" that is, I mean——

ANGEL. Ah! Mr. Gimper, I understand you; you think more of the flowers of intellect than of the earth, the latter early die, whereas the former but become more beautiful with age.

GIMP. Ahem! yes, ma'am.

ANGEL. 'Tis only kindred hearts that can appreciate such sentiments.

GIMP. It is only kindred hearts that can appreciate such sentiments. (*pause*)

ANGEL. (*aside*) How sad and pensive he looks.

GIMP. (*aside*) I'll try again. Miss Doughberry, Angelina—that is I mean, Miss Angelina Doughberry—I am about to do a desperate deed; don't be alarmed, ma'am, I shan't hurt any body. I am about to—to—to launch my bark upon the stormy main—that is I mean, in a word, I'm going to say, that I feel to be supremely blessed—I need only one thing——

Enter MATILDA, *hurriedly*, R.

MATILDA. Which it is the key of the store room, if you please, mum?

GIMP. (*aside*) Confound it, that's just my luck, and I was on the point of telling her everything.

ANGEL. (*aside*) Good-for-nothing hussey; she has been listening, I'll be bound.

MATILDA. Which master thinks as you has, mum.

ANGEL. Dear me, I'm so flurried—I can't find it.

MATILDA. And which he says he wants to know as if you've got the best chiney service out. And oh, mum, do come and look at the puddin'.

ANGEL. Mr. Gimper, we can resume our conversation at a future period. You will excuse me, domestic arrangements must be attended to. *Exit* R.

MATILDA. Which she is a jewel as is fit to adorn any man; and I only wishes as somebody would take her, (*aside*) and jolly quick, too. *Exit*, R.

GIMP. That young female's concluding observation I could not catch, but doubtless it was something in praise of Miss Doughberry. Ah! Angelina, many a time and oft have I sat and mused upon the happy future that capricious fate so tenaciously holds from me; aye, and often and often have I said to myself——

Enter DOUGHBERRY, R.

DOUGH. Gimper, old boy, how are you? Why, you look

surprised to see me; there is nothing so very extraordinary in meeting a man in his own house, is there, eh?

GIMP. No; that is I mean I—I've been wishing to see you for some time past, and now you come so unexpectedly.

DOUGH. Just so, just so; and now we have met let us make the most of our time. (*both sit*) Sam, your letter didn't surprise me.

GIMP. Oh, didn't it? that is I mean I was in hopes it wouldn't, because——

DOUGH. Yes, yes, I know. Well, we're old chums; I flatter myself that I know you, and I believe—I say I believe I am justified in placing my niece's happiness——

GIMP. Miss Fanny!

DOUGH. I repeat—my niece's happiness in your hands.

GIMP. But, my dear sir——

DOUGH. But, again: bless my heart, does everybody wish to drive me mad with their confounded "buts"—it's been nothing all day but "buts." Do they take me for a volunteer or a publican?

GIMP. Well, then, John Doughberry, let me explain——

DOUGH. There is no explanation necessary; you have expressed a desire—or what is tantamount to such—to be allied to my family, and I give my consent; what need then of any explanation? You don't wish to go back from your word do you, Samuel Gimper, do you? Because if I caught any man daring to address any member of the house of Doughberry, and then attempt to retract, I'd—I'd bake him, I'd warm him—that I would. However, you are not such a man, eh, Sam?

GIMP. I trust not; yet you——

DOUGH. So do I—I hope you are not; and now, you know me to be a man of few words; there is really nothing I hate and detest so much as needless talking. I say—and now as we quite understand one another (GIMPER *attempts to speak*) don't interrupt me—I say, as we quite understand one another, I'll find Fanny, (*they rise*) and settle it with her. Now don't you excite yourself—I'll arrange it all and soon rejoin you. Sam, you're a happy dog. *Exit* R., *laughing*.

GIMP. And I'm a happy dog, am I? then I should very much like to know what must be the feelings of an unhappy member of the canine species; I adore Miss Doughberry, but I can't tell her so; and her brother will have it that I love his niece—and what's more, seems determined to make me marry her! What on earth am I to do; will somebody assist me? Oh dear, oh dear! here's a pretty situation; it's just like my luck though.

Enter ERNEST, R.

ERNEST. (*aside*) Coast seems pretty clear—no policeman

visible—so I've just run back, after being chevied to death, to tell Fanny that—(*sees* GIMPER) Holloa! who're you?

GIMP. "A happy dog." Who're you?

ERNEST. An unhappy dog.

GIMP. My dear sir—my very dear sir, I'm delighted to hear it—that is, I mean delighted to see you. May I ask the cause of your unhappiness?

ERNEST. May I enquire what causes your happiness?

GIMP. Oh, certainly! I'm going to marry a very amiable (*dolefully*) young lady, niece to my old friend John—John Doughberry.

ERNEST. What! you going to marry Miss Merton?

GIMP. (*hopelessly*) Precisely.

ERNEST. Then listen to me, Samuel Gimper, for I know you; if you do, I'll haunt you day and night, (*walking him across stage*) sleeping and waking, on land and on sea, anywhere and everywhere, I'll be your evil genius—your monster Frankenstein.

GIMP. Good gracious! you don't say so—that is, I mean I hope you won't; I'm sure I don't bear you any ill will—I'm one of the most harmless of mankind. I would not tread on a blackbeetle, then why turn against poor Samuel Gimper?

ERNEST. You would rob me of my greatest happiness—snatch away the cup I was just raising to my lips—you would marry the girl I love.

GIMP. (*showing signs of joy*) Jubilate!

ERNEST. Why, what in the name of fortune are you doing now?

GIMP. And is that all? Hooray!

ERNEST. Isn't it quite enough?—all, indeed! but I'll be revenged! (*aside*) The man must be mad.

GIMP. Benighted individual! calm your fears. I bring balm to your bruised heart, that is, I mean I can assist you to the attainment of your hopes, if you will assist me to attain mine.

ERNEST. Explain yourself.

GIMP. Misguided young gentleman, when I remarked that I was a "happy dog," I meant it in its reverse application; I—I admire Miss Merton, but I positively worship Miss Doughberry, and I do believe that a lady of an age more corresponding with my own, would be a more suitable match than the lovely and accomplished young lady for whom you entertain such tender sentiments; therefore, know all men, that I, Samuel Gimper, do hereby of my own free will and consent resign into your hands all outstanding claims against the person and fortune of Miss Fanny Merton.

ERNEST. Then, Samuel Gimper, you're an unmitigated brick! Command me in any way, and Ernest Plumeville, of 89, Claremont Square, Pentonville, N., is yours very truly.

GIMP. Will you back me up if we go at once to John Doughberry? I couldn't undertake the whole responsibility myself.

ERNEST. Fear nothing, I'll carry you through; doubtless we shall find him and the ladies in the garden, and if that intelligent policeman is only out of the way, we'll get on capitally. *Exeunt*, R.

Enter MATILDA, R.

MATILDA. Which it's enough to pervoke a saint; just as Benjamin and me was a sitting down comfortable-like to a bit of somethink, in bounces missis, and afore Benjamin, begins a rating me about my awful waste (which Benjamin says as it is a very neat one), then she packs me off for her shawl—it's my belief as she don't want it, 'twere only to see what we was a having; well, she'll find as the beer is a getting low—Benjamin says as it's only table beer, and of course it should always be on the table. *Exit*, L.

Y 80. (*sings without*)

When the 'eart of a man is hoppressed with cares,
And his dooties are more than his strength well bears,

Enters R., *intoxicated.*

Well, what then? why in coorse he must do his dooty like a man, he must stand by his dooty. Hit's curous what hideas some people has; now there's that haged party has his Mr. Doughberry's sister, she's a hidea has I'm not sober; why, I've perfect perssession hof hall my faculties, hof some I've heven hextra power.

Enter MATILDA, *with shawl*, L.

For hinstance, I can distinctly see two doors a opening, and, bless my eyes! two Matilda Janes; well, I didn't think there was her hequal hanywheres. 'Tilda, my double toolip!

MATILDA. Ho, you oderous wretch! you're been at it agin, which you're intoxicated.

Y 80. My hangel!

MATILDA. Benjamin, Benjamin, which you disgraces your cloth, likewise your noble profession, and only to think as I've knowed you eleven months come the 18th, and never seed you as you is at present. Benjamin, Benjamin, I'm ashamed on you, and if the burglar should come now, who's to protect me?

Y 80. Hit's hall right.

MATILDA. But which I thinks as it's all wrong. Howsomever, it's all over now, (*crying*) and I casts you off for ever and ever. *Exit*, R.

Y 80. Very well, Miss Matilda Jane, very well mum, and I'll make myself comfortable till you comes to your senses.

(*sits in easy chair, back to* AUDIENCE) I'll close my heyes hupon the houter world—my native land, good night. (*falls asleep*)

Enter DOUGHBERRY *and* MRS. YOUNGHUSBAND, R.

DOUGH. My dear madam, allow me to place a chair, the heat of the weather doubtless has produced this headache. Don't, my dear madam, don't sigh like that, you lose a drop of blood every time—don't ma'am.

MRS. Y. Ah! Mr. Doughberry, what does it matter? I'm a poor weak widow with no object in life to live for—nothing to care for, and nobody to care for me.

DOUGH. Don't say so, my dear madam.

MRS. Y. Believe me, it is so; there is no one who cares for me, unless it be Fanny, and——

DOUGH. Myself. (*aside*) Dear me, she is a remarkably fine woman, I never observed that before; she don't seem very happy—I dare say the late Mr. C. Y. was a brute.

MRS. Y. Had it not been for yourself and your niece, I should have long since expired.

DOUGH. My dear madam——

MRS. Y. What is life to me, or I to life? I am but an unit in the great sum total of society; my loss would not be felt—scarcely mourned.

DOUGH. Don't say so, Mrs. Younghusband, I assure you we should mourn it very much, and I should feel it particularly. (*aside*) I wonder how she likes the name of Doughberry.

MRS. Y. Ah! you men are all alike, and you can compliment like the rest; poor Cæsar used to—before we were married—heigho!

DOUGH. (*aside*) I thought he must have been a brute.

MRS. Y. And even you, Mr. Doughberry——

DOUGH. Now, really——

MRS. Y. Oh! I know; you surely remember——

Y 80. (*talking in his sleep*) Matilda Jane!

DOUGH. What for, ma'am?

MRS. Y. I did not mention that name.

DOUGH. That's very odd then, as there are only ourselves here, but permit me to correct an erroneous impression, I assure you I am——

Y 80. (*in his sleep*) A reg'lar cracksman, I knows him.

DOUGH. (*starting up*) Who dares to say so?

MRS. Y. There must be some one in the room. (*wheels chair to the front*, C.) A policeman asleep!

DOUGH. A member of that glorious institution of our country, drunk and incapable—I blush for him, I positively blush for him. (*aside*) I hope he is not feigning. (*awakening him*)

Y 80, arouse thyself. Policeman, take yourself into custody, and lock yourself up for being drunk and incapable.

Y 80. (*getting up, not quite so intoxicated*) Sir, you labours hunder a wrong hidea, the 'eat of the weather and the severe fatigues of the day—(*aside*) with your bad beer—'ave slightly hunsprung my nerves, oh! that's all I do assure you; 'owsomdever I'll leave you to the ferocious mercies of a tender burglar, yes, sir. (*opens door*, R.) By Jupiter! there he is, there he goes! (*returns—confidentially*) he don't hescape this time.

Exit, cautiously, R.

DOUGH. My dear madam, I am a man of few words, there is really nothing I hate and detest so much as needless talking, and therefore—I say and therefore I—(*aside*) I'm getting as bad as Gimper. I was about to say, my dear Mrs. Younghusband, that my niece is going to be married.

MRS. Y. Doubtless you will feel the trial at parting with her very much, more especially should your sister also leave.

DOUGH. What Angelina? nonsense!

MRS. Y. My dear sir, you must not think such a step unlikely, but you must bear it like a man; of course the absence of your niece from a home where she shed such a halo of happiness around, must be felt very deeply, and the loss of so domestic a treasure as your sister, will be very great; but—but —— (DOUGH *takes her hand*)

DOUGH. Go on, my dear madam, go on, it is the first time I have heard a sensible "but" to-day.

MRS. Y. Oh, Mr. Doughberry, how can you? please release my hand, suppose anyone should enter the room. Oh! really, Mr. Doughberry.

DOUGH. Mrs. C. Y., do you see why you should not be Mrs. D.—in short, ma'am——

Enter GIMPER, ANGELINA, Y 80, *with* ERNEST *in custody, followed by* MATILDA, R.

Y 80. I'm the man, and here's the burglar.

DOUGH. (*aside*) I'm deeply grieved to say it, but confound that official. What is all this?

GIMP. Allow me to explain—which you would not do just now, and thereby very nearly caused most serious results—that is, I mean you nearly drove four people crazy.

DOUGH. Good gracious me! how so?

GIMP. In the first place, I—I never dreamt of paying my addresses to your niece, but to your sister—in fact Miss Fanny had already chosen another partner.

DOUGH. What! Fanny choose for herself?

FANNY. I couldn't help it, dear uncle, and—and—if you please, uncle, this is Mr. Ernest Plumeville, uncle.

ANGEL. A most respectable and highly educated young man, brother.

DOUGH. Oh ho! I begin to see a little more clearly.

Y 80. (*releasing* ERNEST) So do I; hit strikes me I've got the wrong 'un haltogether.

MRS. Y. Come, Mr. Doughberry, what have you to say?

DOUGH. Let me ask you that question: all the rest seem to run in couples, and why not we, eh? Mrs. Younghusband, don't turn up your nose at rather an old husband. (*they retire up*)

MATIL. (*to* Y 80) Which it's a pretty pickle as you're in, and sarve you right.

Y 80. Be merciful as you are beautiful, Matilda Jane. I humbly haxes parding hof heverybody, likewise mostly hof that gentleman, whose frequent visits to this 'ouse hat all hours 'ave been so misconstructed.

ERNEST. Oh, I freely forgive you, and so I dare say will Mr. Doughberry.

DOUGH. (*coming down*, C., *with* MRS. YOUNGHUSBAND) Certainly, certainly, forgive and forget is one of my mottoes.

MATIL. (R.) Which it is a very good 'un, and therefore, Benjamin, as you promises better for the future, why I forgives you.

GIMP. (L.) I—I—I think I should like to say a few words—that is I mean, to—to them you know. (*to* AUDIENCE) I—I that is— (*hesitates and turns toward* ERNEST) You'd better speak to them—I can't.

ERNEST. (L. C.) May we hope that you will endorse that good old motto, forgive and forget, with respect to our faults.

FANNY. In which case we shall always be happy to do our best to cause you any amusement, and to——

DOUGH. (C.) To see you as often as you like to come here, and the oftener the better, mind to——

ADOLPH. *opening door*, R., *and announces*) Dinner! (*a short pause*—DOUGHBERRY *comes forward*, C.)

DOUGH. One moment stay; to gain an appetite
We need your presence with us ev'ry night;
Without your cheering smile, approving hand,
We raise a "Misconstruction"—cannot stand.
But show us please—you know the usual way—
We've found some favour for this little play.

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